

NEW YORK  
HERALD TRIBUNE

MAY 1 1964

## Matter of Fact

### "Ours" and "Theirs"

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NAIROBI, Kenya.

Here in Kenya, the Home Minister, Oginga Odinga, has pretty certainly taken rather more than \$250,000 from the Chinese Communists. Thereby he has gained political control of the large Luo tribe, thus capturing the natural popular base of the better known Kenya leader, Tom Mboya, who is also a Luo.

Superficially, Minister Odinga looks like an excellent investment for Peking. He is a tough, able, determined man, the chief challenger, in fact, to the deep-rooted authority of the local number one, Jomo Kenyatta.

Odinga, now in Moscow en route to Peking, is also by way of being a representative African phenomenon. The Chinese Communist hiring in Zanzibar, Abdul Rahman Mohammed Babu, was just completing the transformation of Zanzibar into a Chinese Communist base in Africa when his work was abruptly undone by the surprise merger of Zanzibar with Tanganyika.

The leader of the potentially dangerous Kwilu rebellion in the ex-Belgian Congo, Pierre Mulele, is almost certainly another Chinese Communist agent. And these are only the most significant names on the list.

The Soviet operation in Africa is far less flamboyant than the Chinese. The Soviets came into the open in Zanzibar, to be sure, only to have their man there, Vice-President Hanga, defeated at all points by the more aggressive Babu in the period before the merger. This is why the merger came as an obvious relief to Moscow.

With this exception, however, certainly identifiable Soviet agents are not easy to spot among the competing leaders of the newly liberated African states. One reason for the greater caution of the Soviets, beyond much doubt, is the simple fact that Moscow's fingers were badly burned at the very beginning of the African game.

This happened in Guinea, where the Russians at first moved in like so many humorless Marxist parodies of "The Man Who Came to Dinner." When they began treating Guinea as their very own, however, President Sekou Toure showed them to the door with great speed and scant courtesy. And much of Moscow's large investment in Guinea was then lost.

Despite Moscow's relative caution, the African competition between Moscow and Peking is ferocious to the point of open scandal. Beginning with the Moshi meeting over a year ago, moreover, a chief feature of the contest has been the Chinese Communist attempt to hang the label of "white colonialists" on the indignant Soviets.

Now, however, it is plain that the Chinese have also overplayed their hand, just as the Russians did in Guinea. A main source—probably the main source—of the sudden movement to merge Zanzibar into Tanganyika was the resentment and alarm aroused among almost all East African politicians not on the Peking pay roll, by the sheer heavy-handed flagrancy of Peking's takeover efforts.

In another area, heavy handedness is also quite clearly ceasing to pay. The thinly disguised puppet regimes which the French managed to install in almost all their ex-colonies in Africa are becoming less and less secure, mainly because their puppet status is so evident.

In the French Congo, the Abbe Fulbert Youlou regime has gone down the drain already. President Mba in Gabon is only hanging on with the help of French paratroopers. Several other cases might be cited.

In truth the whole costly structure of French control of these African states is obviously not going to prove durable. When it collapses of its own weight, we must of course expect the CIA to be blamed—but that is another subject.

This is a troubled continent, in fact, in which the Sino-Soviet contest is only one factor. In the long run, the Portuguese colonies, Southern Rhodesia, even South Africa itself seem unlikely to be able to withstand the independence movements which now threaten them. By the same token, there is no truly independent African state, whether Leftwards leaning or Rightwards leaning, which can be confidently said to have found its final political form.

Everything is provisional, and subject to change at a moment's notice for unpredictable reasons. For the West, and specially for the U. S., this means two things. On the one hand, we have a duty to be generous and helpful with these new nations. But on the other hand, we must avoid like the plague the tendency to divide the new African states into those which are "ours" and those which are "theirs." No African state is likely to be dependably Communist or the reverse for a long time to come. That is the central point to remember.